

# Welcome Centers Workgroup Report

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# Background

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- 2003 - MacLaren Children's Center closes
- Children await placement at offices of CSWs
- Children await placement at Command Post
- 2012 – Children's Welcome Center opens as alternative
- 2014 – Youth Welcome Center opens, with “accelerated placement team.”

# Children's Welcome Center

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- Children ages 0-11
- In first quarter, 199 entries aged 0-2
- **70% of children were new detentions**
- 10% of new detentions identified as having mental health issues
- **90% of re-placement children identified with mental health issues**
- 22% of all children and youth were under age 5

# Youth Welcome Center

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- Children and youth ages 12-21
- **15% new detentions (85% re-placements)**
- 15% of new detentions identified as having mental health issues
- **85% of re-placements identified as having mental health issues**
- 44% of total children and youth between ages 14-18.

# Entries: January-March, 2015

\*\*Note: numbers may reflect multiple entries of same child or youth

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	January	February	March
Children's Center	219	204	208
Youth Center	359	317	319
Total	578	521	527

# Children's & Youth Welcome Centers

Ages	January 2015	February 2015	March 2015
0-2	62	62	75
3-5	59	44	35
6-11	84	75	96
11<12	14	27	12
12-13	64	40	49
14-16	184	151	70
17-18	13	30	66
Total	578	521	527

# New detentions/replacements

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## Children's Welcome Center

	January	February	March
New detention	<b>149</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>151</b>
Re-placement	70	65	57
	219	204	208

## Youth Welcome Center

	January	February	March
New detention	54	40	48
Re-placement	<b>305</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>271</b>
	359	317	319

# Repeat Entries to the Centers

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## CHILDREN'S WELCOME CENTER

January	21
February	22
March	20
<u>Total:</u>	<u>63</u>

## YOUTH WELCOME CENTER

January	36
February	43
March	29
<u>Total:</u>	<u>108</u>



# Children & youth identified as having mental health issues

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## CHILDREN'S WELCOME CENTER

January	33
February	29
March	20
<u>Total:</u>	<u>82</u>

## YOUTH WELCOME CENTER

January	46
February	45
March	49
<u>Total:</u>	140

# Barriers to placement

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- Insufficient number of foster homes for very young children and for older youth
- Insufficient number of emergency shelter care (ESC) beds available, especially for very young children
- Severe mental health needs of children and youth, and lack of supports to enable foster caregivers to manage in these situations

# Obstacles to recruitment and retention of foster homes

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- Visitation requirements
- Lack of childcare for working foster caregivers
- Dual certification requirement
- Lack of immediate and ongoing support to children/youth with serious mental health needs and to the people who care for them

# Obstacles, cont'd.

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- Lack of information about children in need of placement
- Lack of immediate reimbursement for clothing, formula, diapers
- Children arrive with medication, but no authorization for it
- Lack of compensation if child arrives after midnight
- Negative press about child welfare in L.A. County

# Why we must act

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- Traumatized children and youth are being further traumatized at a critical time
- Early life stress (abuse, neglect, parental absence, loss or rejections) overwhelms young child's psychobiological resources
- Negative and potentially life-long effects on brain function and development
- Early childhood and adolescence are times when critical brain development is occurring. These are the two ages comprising greatest number in the centers currently
- Youth with serious mental health problems are at risk of becoming homeless, incarcerated, on public assistance, vulnerable to predators and traffickers.
- Institutionalizing the Youth Welcome Center risks creating a new MacLaren in the county

# Recommendations: CWC

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- Reconceptualize certification as a stepwise process, rather than requiring dual certification
- Targeted and intensified recruitment of foster homes for children 0-5 years
- Conduct analysis of needed numbers of emergency shelter beds, treatment foster beds, and emergency foster beds, and recruit accordingly
- Develop procedures for transportation and monitoring of visitation that alleviates some of the burden for foster parents

# CWC recommendations, cont'd.

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- Initiate Family Finding as soon as child is detained.
- Conduct a cost analysis of the costs of the CWC, including additional costs (construction, additional staffing, etc) necessitated by licensure requirements.
- Provide adequate information to caregivers at time of placement
- Develop a positive public relations campaign that encourages people to become foster parents
- License CWC as 72-hour emergency shelter and assessment facility.

# YWC - recommendations

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- Develop county-wide network of emergency placements with foster homes and group homes
  - Immediate mental health supports upon entry
  - Multi-disciplinary crisis team with DCFS, MH, LACOE, and others to assist in stabilization and planning
- Timely Family Team Conferencing
- Develop county-wide continuum of treatment foster homes and treatment group home placements



# YWC – recommendations, cont'd.

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- Initiate Family Finding as soon as youth is detained or in need of re-placement
- Conduct a cost analysis of the current costs of the YWC and other alternatives outlined in this report
- Develop a plan to close the YWC, with a time frame.

# Conclusion

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- Complex problems requiring multi-pronged solutions
- Comprehensive, system-wide plan that crosses departments and agencies, under OCP umbrella
- County-wide network of relative placements, foster homes, emergency and shelter placements, supported by DCFS and MH
- Individualized assessment and placement that is child-based and developmentally appropriate